



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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# Joseph Jenks Junior High School

PAWTUCKET

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

February 11, 2005



### **School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)**

**The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education**

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**For information about SALT, please contact:**

**Rick Richards**

**401-222-4600, x 2194**

**or**

**[salt@ridoe.net](mailto:salt@ridoe.net).**

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT .....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>SOURCES OF EVIDENCE .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>USING THE REPORT.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>2. PROFILE OF JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>IMPORTANT THEMATIC FINDING IN STUDENT LEARNING .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>COMMENDATIONS FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PAWTUCKET SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>COMMENDATIONS FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PAWTUCKET SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>7. FINAL ADVICE TO JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>REPORT APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>SOURCES OF EVIDENCE FOR THIS REPORT.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<b>THE JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VISIT TEAM .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Joseph Jenks Junior High School from February 7 through 11, 2005.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

- ◆ *How well do students learn at Joseph Jenks Junior High School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at Joseph Jenks Junior High School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does Joseph Jenks Junior High School support learning and teaching?*

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

*The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Joseph Jenks Junior High School distinct.*

*The team did not compare this school to any other school.*

*When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.*

**The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.**

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at [www.Catalpa.org](http://www.Catalpa.org). Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or [ride0782@ride.ri.net](mailto:ride0782@ride.ri.net) for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

## Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 150 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Also, the team spent a total of 43 hours talking with teachers, staff and administration over the course of the visit.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 35 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- ◆ *Important enough to include in the report*
- ◆ *Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit*
- ◆ *Set in the present, and*
- ◆ *Contains the judgment of the team*

## Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Joseph Jenks Junior High School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the Pawtucket District School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Pawtucket School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Joseph Jenks Junior High School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

## 2. PROFILE OF JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Jenks Junior High School first opened its doors in the 1920s in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, home of Slater Mill and birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. First located in downtown Pawtucket, Jenks moved into its present newly constructed building on Division Street more than twenty-five years ago. When it was accepted as a Carnegie School in 1995, Jenks began to make the transition from being a junior high school to being a middle school that attempts to embrace the *Turning Points* philosophy. Open classrooms occupy the open-space areas on the second floor of the school. In this area there are three “houses” where 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms are partitioned by moveable walls.

Two administrators, one principal and an assistant principal, approximately 70 faculty members and 17 staff members provide various services for the students at Jenks. There are seven academic teams: two in the sixth grade, two in the seventh grade, and three in the eighth grade. The rich cultural diversity at Jenks is one of its most notable assets. Approximately 52 percent of the students are from homes where English is not the primary language. The students and staff represent more than 23 countries. Jenks educates the entire sixth, seventh and eighth grade LEP middle school population and all of the moderate and severe/profound middle school special education students in the district. Three classes serve the severe/profound special education students, and one class serves the behaviorally disordered students.

Six-hundred-and-eighty-five students attend school at Jenks. Of this number, 42 percent are Hispanic, 32 percent are white, 24 percent are African American, 1.6 percent is Asian and 0.1 percent is Native American. Two-hundred-and-six students (30%) are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). Twenty-five percent of the students receive special education services. Approximately five-hundred-and-sixty-nine students (83%) receive free and/or reduced-price lunch. Jenks participates in the universal free breakfast program that the district provides.

Several important reform initiatives are underway at Jenks. One includes a grant that Jenks received from the Eisenhower Regional Alliance for Math and Science at TERC, a not-for-profit education research and development organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mathematics teachers learn about formative assessment strategies and practice them. In addition, literacy and numeracy after-school ramp-up programs are in place for students who need extra support in these areas. There is also a summer school ramp-up program for this purpose. Another reform initiative includes a fledgling Advisor/Advisee program that is largely embraced by the faculty, staff and students. There is also a Professional Book Club, where faculty members read and meet to discuss books that are relevant to the educational context of the school. Jenks is a member of the *Eat Healthy, Get Active* initiative and has been identified as a partner in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant.

### **3. PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

Jenks Junior High School is a city school located just a home run away from McCoy Stadium in the City of Pawtucket. Cultural diversity is one of its most notable assets. The school resembles an embassy row in Washington, D.C. with students and staff from many backgrounds and different places representing 23 countries. The students here are charming, friendly and outgoing. They greet visitors with smiles and offer to help them find their way. Students have great respect for one another regardless of ethnicity or disabilities.

Today the faculty and staff show a new sense of hope. This hope springs from the new principal, whose educational leadership has set the school on a path toward excellence for both teachers and students. She has begun the school's journey toward excellence by empowering her teachers to excel. Like new sprouts in the spring, there are teachers here who are changing the color of the landscape of this school. They challenge the status quo of typical instruction and challenge themselves and their colleagues to provide instruction that motivates students to learn how to learn. And results are beginning to show in the pockets of superior teaching and learning that exist here. Nevertheless much still needs to be done to bring all aspects of the school to this level of excellence.

The school is full of inconsistencies. Teachers want students to learn, but teachers do much of the work. Literacy is a focus of the school, but the library is used infrequently. Teachers have divergent teaching philosophies, strategies and styles. Expectations for student achievement and behavior vary across student groups and grade levels. Discipline is inconsistent at the school level and within the classrooms. The open classrooms with their partitions and increased noise levels are not conducive to optimal learning, and, although the rooms are "open," the air quality in these areas is questionable. While the entire school is connected to the Internet and wireless service is in place, up-to-date computer technology is insufficient.



## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Conclusions

In many classes throughout the day, students often read or listen to others read. However, students with strong skills in reading for basic understanding are the exception. Some students do read books at their appropriate levels of difficulty productively and successfully. This occurs in certain classes, particularly in English Language Arts and reading classes. These students read fluently at appropriate levels as they make use of leveled texts. Many independently and easily share the main points of their reading as they successfully retell, summarize, predict and cite the text. On the other hand, in numerous other classes, particularly those in the content areas, students read, but they do not always demonstrate these same comprehension skills and strategies. Instead, they wait for their teachers to tell them the answers. Here, students often struggle to read the same literature or text, regardless of their ability levels. In these instances, students successfully read and comprehend literature and texts only with teacher support. Furthermore, beginner ESL students are confused and frustrated when they are included in classes without the support they need to comprehend what they read. All in all, students have varying degrees of success in their basic understanding of texts. Their analysis and interpretation skills are weak. Reviewing the results of the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summary in reading corroborates this. While 39% of students achieved the standard on the reading basic understanding subtest, only 17% achieved the standard on the reading analysis and interpretation subtest. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Many students write well and often across the curriculum. Students use journals to write informally about their feelings, decisions and personal experiences and to explain their thinking processes. These entries are typically thoughtful and reflective. Journal writing allows these students to have voice and demonstrate effective writing. Many students use the writing process to create, write, revise and edit their formal pieces of writing. Furthermore, they use rubrics to guide their writing. Students' performance on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination writing subtest show that 56% of students achieved the standard in writing effectiveness and 38% met the standard in writing conventions. Still, some students struggle to write. They have difficulty composing a thesis statement or a topic sentence, organizing details into coherent paragraphs, or writing a meaningful conclusion. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, talking with students)*

Students rarely participate in high-level problem solving in classes across the curriculum. In many classes they receive, record or summarize information provided by their teachers as they attempt “to cover the material.” Students infrequently explore, inquire, synthesize and apply new information to support problem solving. When they do, they say learning is fun, and they better understand the subject matter. Students only occasionally are fully engaged in authentic problem solving through hands-on activities, cooperative learning and class discussions. The students’ minimal practice in these types of activities helps to explain why only 9% of students met the standard in concepts and problem solving on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination in math. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and the school improvement team, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students, teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

A few students want to learn and expect much of themselves, while many others do not. They are not motivated to challenge themselves or to be actively involved in their schoolwork. Many of these students are content to be obedient, passive learners, primarily writing down what their teachers say and waiting to be told what to do next or for their teachers to give them the answers. Others disrupt the learning environment by calling out, having conversations during instruction, leaving their seats, making unacceptable gestures and generally interrupting classroom activities. A number of students express that they are bored with the material, which they say is repetitive and lacks challenge. These students say that much of the work they do, particularly their homework, is “meaningless,” because they view it as irrelevant “busy work” that is not valued by many of their teachers. They do not feel responsible for completing it. Students and parents say, and the SALT team agrees, that the school does not equally challenge students across the grades; the sixth grade is the most challenging, but this challenge decreases when students progress to grades seven and eight. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and parents, talking with students, teachers, discussing student work with teachers)*

### **Important Thematic Finding in Student Learning**

Students:

- ◆ *Vary greatly in their desire to learn*
- ◆ *Vary greatly in their levels of achievement*
- ◆ *Fail to demonstrate analysis and synthesis skills*

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

### Conclusions

A few teachers, especially those in English Language Arts as well as a few others, explicitly teach and model reading strategies as tools their students can use to learn in all curricular areas. These strategies include identifying key points, retelling, predicting, summarizing, inferring and drawing conclusions. Reading teachers work effectively with the English Language Arts teachers to meet the needs of struggling readers and to model effective reading strategies. Teachers generally read aloud to their students. Some teachers then ask probing questions that require their students to reflect on what they have read and to develop complex answers to questions. Most teachers, however, ask questions about what the students have read and then too quickly give their students the answers. Their wait time is too short, and their expectations are too low. They ask few open-ended questions that would cajole their students to higher levels of reading interpretation. They present their students with reading material that is not challenging enough for some and too challenging for others. Teachers express their frustration with their ineffectiveness in teaching students at reading levels that range from first grade through twelfth grade—all in the same class. While most teachers have had some training in reading instruction, they report that they need more professional development to meet the widely varying needs of their students effectively. Many do not implement the strategies that students need to know to become successful readers. *(observing classes, following students, talking with students, teachers, school and district administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing self study, reviewing SALT Survey report, discussing student work with teachers)*

A few teachers across the content areas, particularly those who teach math and science, teach students how to solve problems by asking open-ended questions, requiring students to conduct inquiries, leading text-based discussions, and providing activities that involve students in multiple strategies and outcomes. Students in these classes successfully work independently or dialogue with their peers in cooperative learning groups. Here teachers act as facilitators of their students' learning, moving from group to group to ask probing questions and to assess progress. Instead, most teachers provide knowledge in a way that accepts students as passive recipients rather than requires them to be active learners. They do not present their students with authentic tasks that require complex thought and effective peer interaction. Some teachers report that they are not comfortable with students working in groups, as this creates noise that disturbs other classes. It should be noted, however, that teachers are more successful in engaging and motivating their students to learn when they present them with effective problem solving opportunities. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing self study)*

Many teachers incorporate the balanced literacy model in their teaching of writing and provide students with writing assignments and time to write throughout the day. Teachers express pride in their students' growth as writers. Yet, much of the writing instruction takes place in the English Language Arts classrooms. Though teachers are successful in teaching formulaic writing such as persuasive and comparative essays, they have yet to engage students successfully in synthesizing their ideas to form original and highly developed conclusions. They rarely teach creative writing. In the content area classes, students typically write to answer questions, rather than write to learn. Here many students routinely copy notes or respond to teacher directives. These routines lack the creative thinking that is essential in writing to learn. Teachers miss opportunities to engage their students in class dialogue about their writing or their ideas. Nevertheless, several components of the district's balanced literacy initiative are beginning to take hold. Teachers in most classrooms use common graphic organizers with a range of success. Although they use rubrics to assess student work, these vary in type and quality. Teachers have set portfolios in place, but they do not always use them effectively; they use them as folders to hold current student work. Teachers are at various stages of knowledge about, and comfort with, implementing and integrating effective writing across the curriculum. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with teachers, reviewing self study, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Some teachers have clear expectations for student learning, and they plan challenging lessons. These teachers use differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on activities and conferencing to challenge their students to use their minds well. But too many teachers do not set high enough expectations. They do not implement activities that include problem solving to promote independent student learning. Too often students depend on teacher-directed instruction. At the same time, some teachers say that they are challenged to meet the needs of all students. They lower their expectations for student performance in classrooms where there are a high number of special education students, ESL students, or both. In these instances, they have low expectations for the very students, who act out and who do not achieve as well as they could. Students who are not challenged are disengaged and/or disruptive. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, meeting with the students, school administrators, and parents, reviewing self study, reviewing 2004 SALT Survey report, talking with students, teachers, school administrators)*

Some teaching practices do not effectively promote a classroom climate that is conducive to student learning and responsibility. For instance, during sustained silent reading periods, many students do not read, and teachers do not hold them accountable to do so. Accountability is also an issue when students work in groups to complete tasks. Students do not know what is expected of them when they work closely with one another. Teachers do not provide clear expectations of the roles necessary to work interdependently. Teachers only rarely use cooperative learning structures and seldom facilitate these activities. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students, teachers, meeting with the students and parents)*

**Commendations for Joseph Jenks Junior High School**

Pockets of excellent teaching

Emphasis on teaching the writing process

Emerging balanced literacy instruction

Willingness of the faculty to improve teaching practices

**Recommendations for Joseph Jenks Junior High School**

Further develop ongoing school-based professional development activities to support the implementation of differentiated instruction and inclusion models.

Teach specific strategies to help all students become strong readers across all classes throughout the day.

Increase the opportunities for students to become independent learners through high level questioning and dialogue, inquiry, and research-based projects.

Increase hands-on activities and cooperative learning that require students to think and explore and to become active participants in their own learning. Become the facilitators of learning, rather than the providers of information.

Ensure that all students are engaged in and accountable for reading during sustained silent reading time.

**Recommendations for the Pawtucket School Department**

Continue to support this school with coaches in literacy and numeracy.

## 6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Conclusions

The new principal is a strong educational leader and change agent. As the district reports, “She sees how all the pieces fit together” within the school. She is “exactly what the school needed.” Since her arrival in September, she has already enlisted a core group of educational leaders to take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of Jenks Junior High School. Using data gathered by various subcommittees throughout the fall, this leadership team issued an impressive, in-depth self-study report that identifies the school’s needs and goals for enhancing teaching and learning. These needs and goals are outlined in the newly developed and comprehensive school improvement plan. The principal and the new school improvement team plan to utilize this SALT Visit report to prioritize these goals, and they plan to establish a timeline for improving student achievement. The principal has outlined an ambitious professional development agenda that combines school-based, as well as district-initiated, offerings. She has moved this student-driven agenda with great momentum. Not surprisingly, some teachers express concern about their ability to keep pace with these changes, while others are easily able to do so. She has begun aligning school-based needs with the resources available at the district level. The district is supportive of her efforts. Nevertheless, she has yet to tap fully into the parent and student populations as resources to gain their insight about improving teaching and learning. Her demonstrated ability to persuade the faculty to share her vision is a critical piece to the continued realization and success of these reforms. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing self study)*

Teachers on the ESL teams are dedicated and caring. The students have an excellent rapport with the majority of their team teachers. Having one house for ESL students, however, has detrimental effects on the progress of ESL students. The “ESL house,” which is isolated in one part of the building, separates these students from their peers in the rest of the student body. This sends the wrong message to some students that ESL students are different. Most ESL teachers set low expectations for student performance in their classes and, by doing so, reinforce this message. Some ESL students say their work is “too easy” and write that school is “boring.” They are ready for greater academic challenges. Many ESL teachers also have low expectations for their students’ behavior. Students talk throughout many classes and in some classes they are very loud. During these lessons, students do not follow the teachers’ instruction. They are not held to the same general school rules as students in the other houses. This is exemplified by the extended time students take when they move from class to class. Students do not display appropriate behavior and language during this time. They lose valuable class time. The dismissal time for this house is considerably earlier than for the rest of the houses, which are dismissed at the end of the day. Also, the progress of ESL students in one class at the intermediate level is adversely affected because of the inclusion of a high number of special education students. This makes it difficult for the ESL teacher to meet the needs of all students in this class. Furthermore, the administrator and teachers report that some students are kept within the ESL program longer than is necessary. The administrator is making efforts to rectify this. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators)*

The schedule for this year was developed at the district level; it does not address several of this school’s needs. It drives the implementation of the curriculum at Jenks Junior High School, scheduling English Language Arts classes in a double period block to address the diverse literacy needs of the students. However, math instruction occurs only during a single period. Math teachers say that they desire the same double period of instructional time as ELA in light of the fact that the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination results show little evidence of students’ improvement in mathematical concepts and problem solving. Teacher morale in the unified arts is also affected by the present schedule. These teachers are not members of teams, and they report that they feel isolated; their classes are scheduled as “fillers” when academic teams meet. Furthermore, these classes are assigned to both single and double periods seemingly without consideration of their instructional purposes. The grouping of some students is also problematic. Far too many special education students with various disabilities are placed in certain inclusion classes. This results in teachers lowering their expectations for all students, as they struggle to meet varied needs. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Disciplinary procedures are inconsistent throughout the school and are largely ineffective. Teachers report this has been an ongoing problem. These inconsistencies—various interpretations of the student handbook, different behavioral expectations for different students, different rules for different locations in the building, and an ineffective after-school detention—all create a stressful school environment for both students and teachers. Teacher teams have attempted to overcome some of these school-wide inconsistencies by establishing informal team-based rules. Teachers say the administration discourages them from sending a student to the office, even though that student is disrupting the learning environment of others. When they do send a student to the office, teachers say the student often returns to class within that same period without a meaningful consequence taking place. In order to avoid this, teachers ignore some disruptive behaviors during their instruction. This negatively affects the quality of student learning and teaching that occur. *(following students, observing the school outside the classroom, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents)*

This school building, which reflects the architecture and educational style of the 1970s, is not conducive to learning today. Students are grouped in teams and housed in classrooms without walls, doors or windows. Instead, classrooms are divided by partitions that are unstable and that have fallen in the past. Some students are not distracted by the cacophony of noises that drift through the houses, but many are. The noise, room temperature and poor air quality significantly hinder learning. Teachers say they have trouble keeping their students on task because of the many outside distractions. They also indicate that the openness of the classrooms does not allow them to promote hands-on or active learning for fear of disturbing the surrounding classrooms. Similarly, the antiquated technology in most areas limits student exploration. At the present time, there are no computers for student use in the media center and only limited access to the Internet. There are few interactive computer programs for classroom integration. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, observing the school outside the classroom)*

The school is immersed in a reform agenda that includes several initiatives. Among these are balanced literacy, a school climate study for improving discipline and student behavior, and a wellness program to promote healthy eating. Many teachers believe in the school's vision to improve student learning and are committed to being change agents to realize the school wide goals. The school's vision is well supported by the new principal, a part-time literacy coach and three reading teachers, as well as by district level administrators. The school is on the right track to improve greatly what it does for students and their learning. *(talking with teachers, school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing self study, reviewing school improvement plan)*



**Commendations for Joseph Jenks Junior High School**

School reform initiatives

Faculty dedication to reflection and change

Principal as educational leader

Comprehensive self-study

**Recommendations for Joseph Jenks Junior High School**

Place ESL classrooms strategically throughout different areas of the school based on grade level.

Follow the district's ESL policy for both placing and exiting students, as they are ready.

Develop a traveling portfolio for each ESL student to monitor each one's progress in all areas from one grade to the next to better identify student readiness for greater challenge.

Establish and implement consistent school-wide rules for student behavior and set appropriate consequences through the work of the newly formed climate steering committee.

Establish a structured place for students to remain when they are sent out of class, do not allow them to return to the same class that day.

Rewrite the student handbook with student-friendly language so that everyone has a clear understanding of the acceptable behaviors and the consequences for misbehavior. Supply each student with his/her own copy.

Rework the schedule at the school level to better serve the needs of all students. Include all teaching staff as active members of academic teams.

Continue your efforts to draw parents and families into your school. Tap into parent leadership to look into a new facility.

**Recommendations for the Pawtucket School Department**

Continue to support the principal in her efforts to improve discipline.

Investigate the possibility of modifying the building to improve student learning and safety.

Perform an air quality study within the school.

Consider floating a bond for a new facility.

## **7. FINAL ADVICE TO JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Diversity is one of the greatest strengths of Jenks Junior High School. Continue to move forward in facing the challenges of educating such a diverse population. Utilize the richness that each cultural group can offer the school. The respectful relationships among students and between students and adults form a good foundation for creating a school that is healthy, safe and well disciplined.

Discipline procedures, however, must be consistent to be effective and to optimize learning and teaching. All staff members—the administrators, the teaching staff and the support staff—must hold students to the same standards for discipline and behavior. Continue the work you have begun to develop a consistent disciplinary code, and then follow it. Revisit the schedule to deal with proper placement of students, the reconstruction of teams, and a new emphasis on math instruction. Involve all teachers in teaching math concepts and effective problem solving. Reorganize the ESL house so that these students become firmly integrated with the student body as a whole. Have faith that your students are ready for more and greater challenges and more independent thinking and learning.

Continue to support the efforts and initiatives of your principal. Take part in the change. Do not be discouraged by those who resist change. Believe it can happen through honest and caring interactions among children, teachers, families and the community. There is an opportunity now for teachers and students to take on leadership roles to improve the school. Don't give up. Take it step by step. Tackle a little at a time, and do it well. You have all the ingredients to make Jenks an excellent school. The only reason that significant change won't happen here is if you do not act. Good luck to you in this endeavor.

## ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

### Joseph Jenks Junior High School

February 11, 2005

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine. While one issue of possible team member conflict was raised, it was determined that no conflict existed.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of a portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



**CATALPA LTD.**

Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

March 17, 2005

## REPORT APPENDIX

### Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Joseph Jenks Junior High School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Joseph Jenks Junior High School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *direct classroom observation*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 11 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - teachers*
  - school improvement team*
  - school and district administrators*
  - students*
  - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
  - district and school policies and practices*
  - Pawtucket School Department ELA Manual, Curriculum, and Assessment*
  - Pawtucket School Department Curriculum Guides*
  - Pawtucket School Department Policy and Informational Handbook, Academics, Discipline, and Health, 2004-2005*
  - Pawtucket School Department Professional Development binder*
  - Pawtucket School Department Strategic Plan*
  - Pawtucket School Department Evaluation Instruments for Administrators, Tenured Teachers, and Non Tenured Teachers*
  - Pawtucket School Department 2004-2005 Information Packet for Mentors and Mentees, Educational Support in Pawtucket*
  - Contract between the School Committee of the City of Pawtucket and the*

*Pawtucket Teacher Alliance, 2000-2003, 2004-2005*  
*Joseph Jenks Junior High School SALT Survey, 2003-2004*  
*Joseph Jenks Junior High School Budget*  
*Joseph Jenks Junior High School Self Study Report, February 4, 2005*  
*SALT Visit Team folder*  
*records of professional development activities*  
*classroom assessments*  
*school improvement plan for Joseph Jenks Junior High School*  
*2004 SALT Survey report*  
*classroom textbooks*  
*2004 Information Works!*  
*2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*  
*School and District Report Cards*

### **State Assessment Results for Joseph Jenks Junior High School**

Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

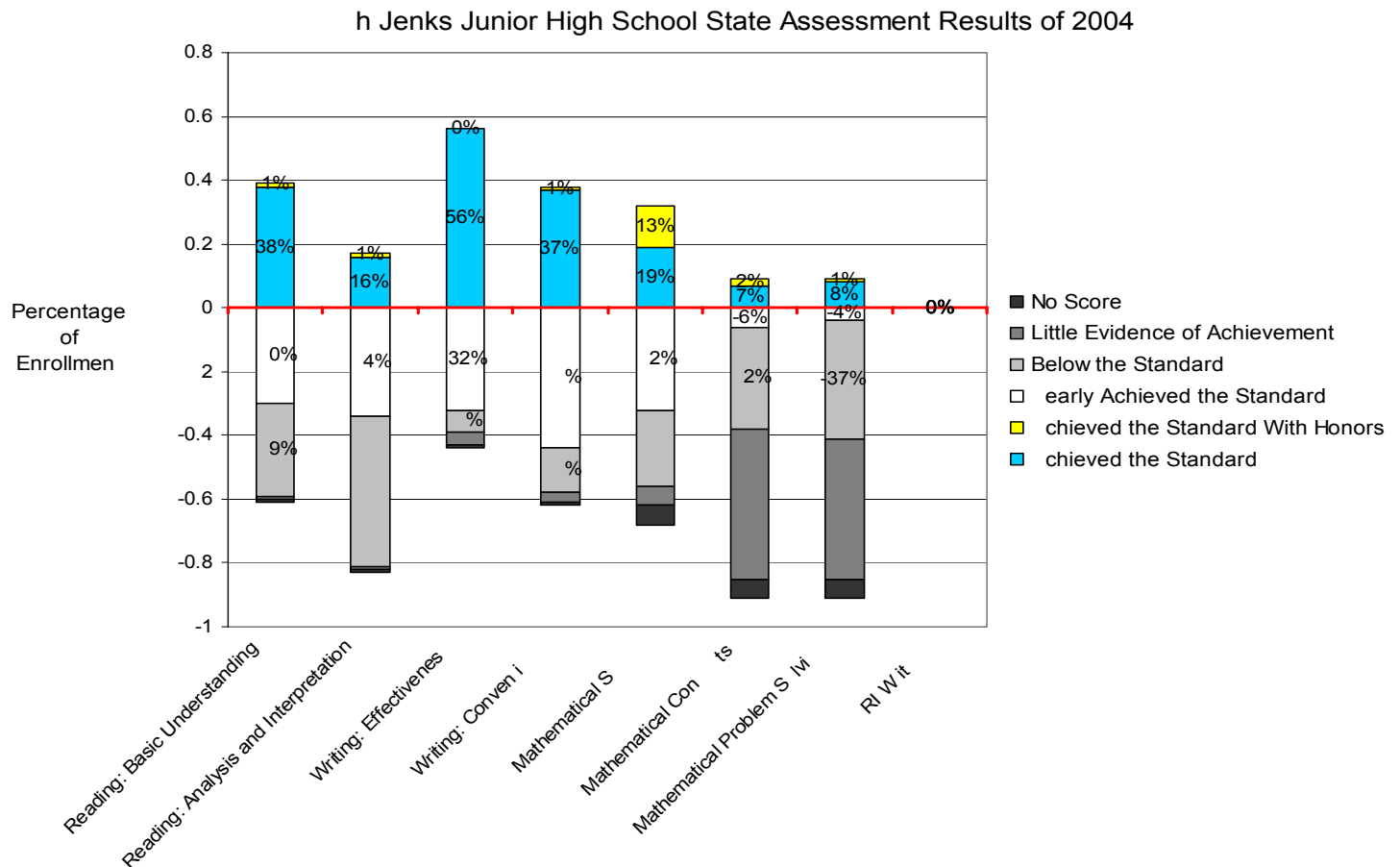
This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

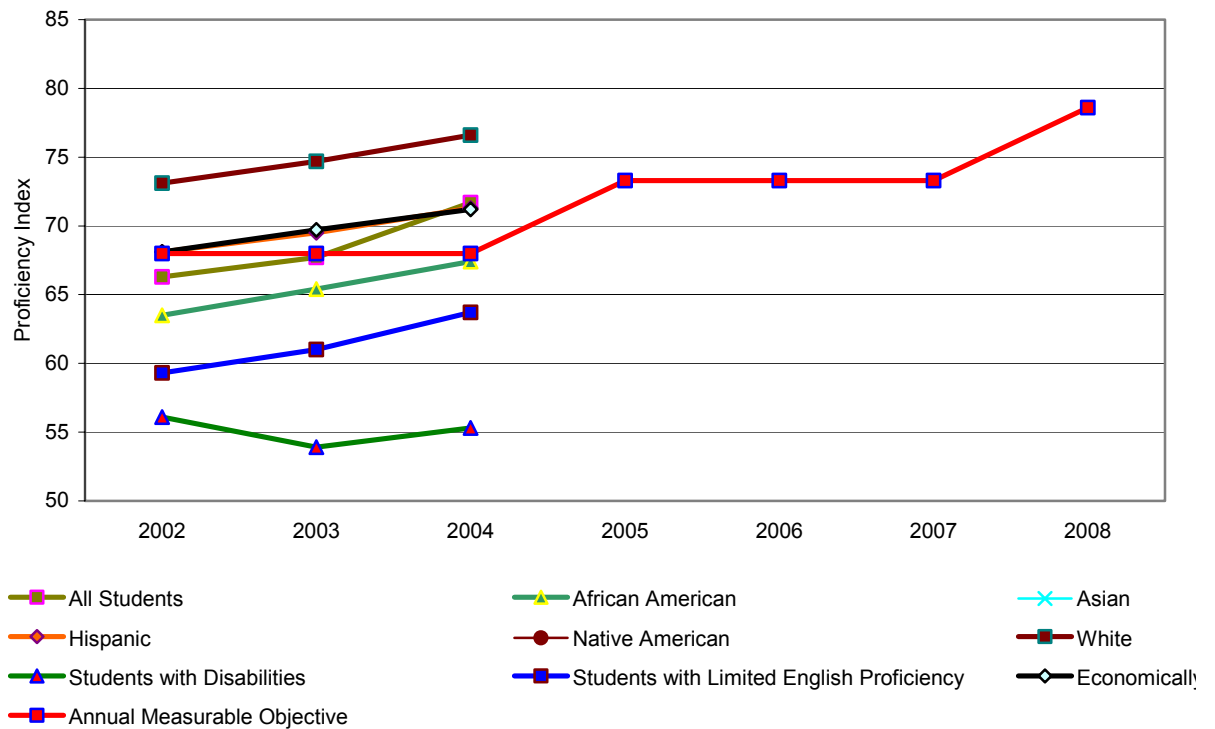
### RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards

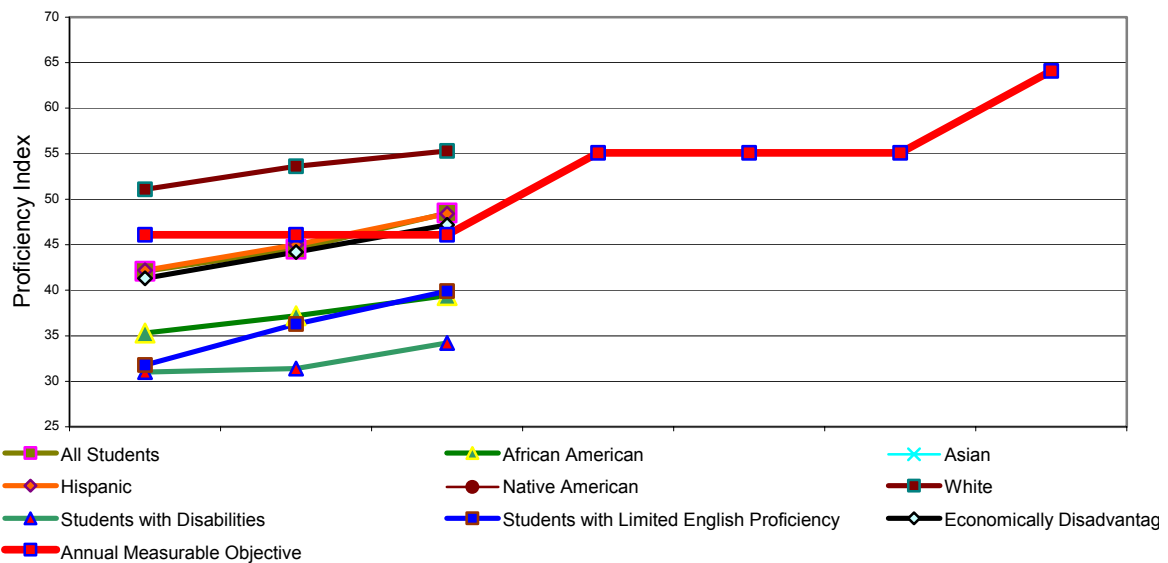
*Table 1. 2003-2004 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments*



Annual Proficiency in ELA, Joseph Jenks Junior High School



Annual Proficiency Math, Joseph Jenks Junior High School





**REPORT CARD FOR JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

This 2004 Report Card shows the performance of Joseph Jenks Junior High School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Joseph Jenks Junior High School as a school in need of improvement, making progress.

*Table 3. Report Card for Joseph Jenks Junior High School*

INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04	ENGLISH LANG. ARTS <b>TARGET SCORE: 68</b>				MATHEMATICS <b>TARGET SCORE: 46.1</b>			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
All Students	71.7	YES	74.6	80.3	48.5	YES	54.1	66.5
African Americans	67.4	YES††	72.3	71.2	39.4	YES†	47.6	49.5
Asian	*	YES	*	79.3	*	YES	*	64.9
Hispanic	71.3	YES	72.4	69.5	48.4	YES	49.7	48.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	76.7	*	YES	*	58.6
White	76.6	YES	77.9	84.4	55.3	YES	59.3	72.8
Students with Disabilities	55.3	YES†	57.6	63.3	34.2	YES†	37.5	46.8
Students with Limited English Proficiency	63.7	YES††	63.3	61	39.9	YES††	40	43.3
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	71.2	YES	73	70.8	47.2	YES	50.6	50.9

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04	<b>Target: 95%</b>			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
English Language Arts	99	YES	98.8	98.6
Mathematics	98	YES	98.6	98.8

ATTENDANCE RATE	<b>Target: 90%</b>			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
	93	YES	93.6	93.6

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	9	0
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	1	0
THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:		
<b>School in Need of Improvement/Making Progress</b>		

Information Works! data for Joseph Jenks Junior High School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

**THE JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM**

William Jeannotte, Chairperson

Marie Ahern, Principal

Anne Barlow

Diana Cookson

George Correia

Don Dupre

Bonnie Harris

Jackie Haynes

Melissa Labossiere

Sandra Leal

Catherine Mills

Linda Mendonca

Jane Renza

Marie Tanguay

Donna Tompson

Patricia Wong

**MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM**

Margaret M. Della Bitta  
Science Teacher  
South Kingstown High School  
on leave to the  
Office of School Improvement and Support Services  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
Regents SALT Fellow  
Team Chair

Mary Lou Bettez  
Grades 6-8 English Language Arts  
Teacher  
Curriculum Coordinator  
Flat River Middle School  
Coventry, Rhode Island

Bill Clarke  
Grades 9-12 English Language Arts  
Teacher  
Literacy Coordinator  
Blackstone Academy Charter School  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Patricia Dubois  
Director of Grants and Assessments  
Woonsocket Public Schools  
Woonsocket, Rhode Island

Rachel Emery  
Grade 6 Math Teacher  
North Cumberland Middle School  
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Bianca Gray  
High School Redesign Coach  
Central High School  
Providence, Rhode Island

Andrea Haywood  
Grades 9-12 ESL Teacher  
Head LIFT Coordinator  
Providence Academy for International  
Studies  
Providence, Rhode Island

Pearl Holloway  
Grades 7-8 Science Teacher  
Samuel W. Bridgham Middle School  
Providence, Rhode Island

Patricia Marcotte  
Principal  
Ponaganset Middle School  
Foster-Glocester, Rhode Island

Alba Montoya  
Bilingual Special Education Teacher  
Gilbert Stuart Middle School  
Providence, Rhode Island

Lisa Vinacco  
Health/Physical Education Teacher  
Woonsocket Middle School  
Woonsocket, Rhode Island